

### **Comments on Telecommunications Relay Service Docket 03-123**

As an oral person with a severe hearing impairment and cochlear implant, I urge FCC to strongly consider implementing Captel (captioned telephone service) as a permanent full time service for all states. I ask why only federal employees and its retirees and Native Americans are the only ones in Louisiana who can use Captel. There are many non federal employees who also would benefit from Captel services. It has many functions all in one phone. It has been shown more people, both hearing and those with hearing loss such as our senior adults and veterans, are receptive to using Captel via tty and telephone and find its operation easier versus using the traditional TRS. Unlike TRS VCO, the hearing impaired can use their residual hearing, use amplification and have normal conversations by being able to speak at the same time as the other party

Time is something very precious to us these days. With VCO relay, the other party on the phone is required to hold while the other person talks or types their response. Needless to say, this method robs us of quality time to do other things. The time factor often discourages people from calling me but Captel's voice recognition ability as opposed to typing and its two way conversations at the same time would save valuable time. Using Captel also provides a more natural feeling for those who were once able to use a regular phone but whose hearing loss no longer affords them that privilege.

An additional major inconvenience with VCO relay one way service is there are persons who tend to talk too long without giving the other person a chance to say something therefore the other party is not allowed to interrupt nor get the attention of the relay operator when needing to get off the phone for meetings, answer the door or tend to children. There are times I've just left the phone to take care of what I needed to do and returned to the phone only to find the person still talking without taking a break. They were not aware I had left the phone. I also missed what was said during the time of absence.

Other than family members and a few close friends, getting the hearing public such as businesses and medical professionals such as doctors, dentists, CPAs and others to call through TRS has been extremely difficult. As a result, important notification calls and appointments needing to be rescheduled in a timely fashion are not made. Many businesses have an answering machine where you must leave a message for them to call back. More often than not, my calls will not be returned through relay even after leaving instructions. Computerized forms do not provide space required to put 711 or instructions in front of my number. I also find the public intimidated and confused about how to use relay VCO. This sometimes makes me feel what's the use of having a phone. With Captel, I think more people will feel more included than excluded therefore more of a part of today's society.

Relay services has a profile on customers who use the relay service to help serve its customers better. My VCO profile has been lost several times so my profile has to be reestablished. Therefore, I am never sure when I call if they have the correct profile. If they don't my call will be answer direct in TTY mode when I'm trying to use VCO. I believe this applies as well when people call me.

Current phone technology, unlike phones with lights to indicate what lines calls are coming in or out from, do not assist in showing how a call is coming in whether it is through a Relay operator, direct tty or direct voice or even fax therefore answering a call is also frustrating. Caller id often does not help identify the type call coming in because even people I know often forget to call 711 first or caller id will just show a number with no name for cell phones. With Captel, I would know the caller is going through an operator when I answer and messages will be left.

During Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in a large dome in La., a phone vendor provided an open trailer with several phones for the hearing to make phone calls free but there was no phone for the hearing impaired provided. In addition, the location of the phone banks was in a very noisy area which makes it difficult for hearing impaired users to hear even with amplification. A Captel phone with its captions would be easy to include in this type set up. During this time, it required even more time than normal to first try to reach relay then continue to try to reach the other party. As a result, because many are reluctant to use TRS, I did not get many important messages.

In summary, Captel will help phone services for the oral hearing impaired community become more user friendly in this new technology era, I would sincerely appreciate your support for all states to offer permanent full time Captel services as soon as possible for it is much needed now. Thank you for your immediate consideration in this important matter.

Ann Boyd